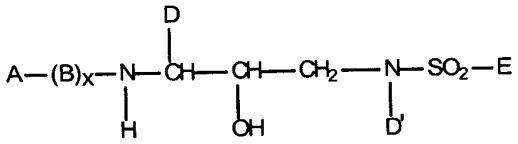
Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A compound of formula I:



(I)

wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of ~~H, Het, $-R^1$-Het,~~ $-R^1$-C_1-C_6 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, ~~Het, -O-Het,~~ $-NR^2$-CO-N(R^2)(R^2) and -CO-N(R^2)(R^2); ~~and $-R^1$-C_2-C_6-alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_1-C_4-alkoxy, Het, -O-Het, $-NR^2$-CO-N(R^2)(R^2) and -CO-N(R^2)(R^2);~~

each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of -C(O)-, $-S(O)_2$-, -C(O)-C(O)-, -O-C(O)-, -O-$S(O)_2$, $-NR^2$-$S(O)_2$-, $-NR^2$-C(O)- and $-NR^2$-C(O)-C(O)-;

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one ~~or more heteroatoms~~ heteroatom selected from N, $N(R^2)$, O, S and $S(O)_n$, wherein said heterocycle may optionally be benzofused; and wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R_2$, $-C(O)-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-R^2$, $-OCF_3$, $-S(O)_n$-Ar, methylenedioxy, $-N(R^2)-S(O)_2(R^2)$, halo, $-CF_3$, $-NO_2$, Ar and -O-Ar;

each R^2 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_3 alkyl optionally substituted with Ar; with the proviso that when R^2 is C_1-C_3 alkyl substituted with Ar, said Ar may not be substituted with an Ar-containing moiety;

B, when present, is $-N(R^2)-C(R^3)(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

each R^3 is independently selected from the group consisting of H, Het, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said R^3, except H, may be optionally substituted with one

or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, $-CN$, $-SR^2$, $-CO_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$;

each n is independently 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; C_1-C_4 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, $-OR_2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; C_2-C_4 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, $-OR^2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar; and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar;

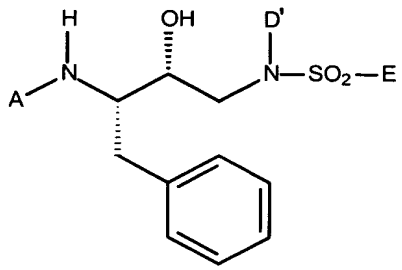
each Ar is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring ~~and 5-6 membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from O, N, S, S(O)$_n$ and N(R^2)~~, wherein said carbocyclic ~~or heterocyclic~~ ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R^2$, ~~$-R^2$-OH~~ C_1-C_3 alkyl substituted with -OH and optionally substituted

with Ar, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, halo and $-CF_3$;

E is selected from the group consisting of Het; O-Het; Het-Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^3$; C_1-C_6 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; C_2-C_6 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; C_3-C_6 saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; and C_5-C_6 unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; and

each R^4 is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo, $-NR^2-C(O)-R^2$ and -CN.

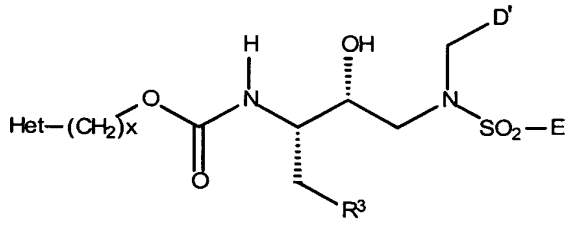
Claim 2 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXII:



(XXII)

and A, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

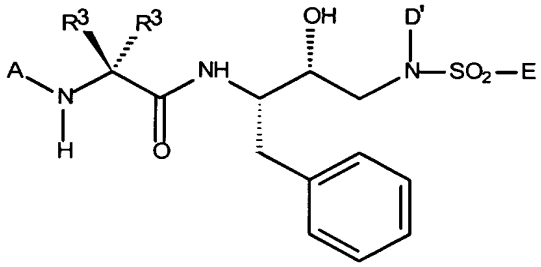
Claim 3 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXIII:



(XXIII)

and x, Het, R^3, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 4 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXXI:



(XXXI)

and A, R^3, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A compound of formula I, wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of ~~H, -R¹-Het,~~ $-R^1-C_1-C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxy~~, Het and -O-Het; and -R¹-C₂-C₆-alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from hydroxy, C₁-C₄ alkoxy, Het and -O-Het~~;

each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of $-C(O)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-C(O)-C(O)-$, $-O-CO-$, $-O-S(O)_2-$ and $-NR^2-S(O)_2-$;

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one ~~or more heteroatoms~~ heteroatom selected from N, O and S, which may optionally be benzofused; wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$, $-R^2-OH$, $-CN$, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$ and $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)_2$;

each R^2 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_3 alkyl;

B, when present, is $-NH-CH(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of Het, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said R^3 may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)_2$, Het and -CN;

n is 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; C_1-C_4 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl or Ar; C_2-C_4 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl or Ar; C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar; and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar; ~~with the proviso that when D is attached to N, D may not be methyl or C_2 alkenyl;~~

Ar is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring ~~and 5-6 membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from O, N and S,~~ wherein said carbocyclic ~~or heterocyclic~~ ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$,

$-N(R^2)-C(O)R^2$, $-R^2-OH$, $-CN$, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$, halo and $-CF_3$;

E is selected from the group consisting of Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^5$; C_1-C_6 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; C_2-C_6 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; C_3-C_6 saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; and C_5-C_6 unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more R^4 or Het;

each R^4 is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo and $-CN$; and

each R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and R^3~~, with the proviso that at least one R^5 is not H~~.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (original): The compound according to claim 3, wherein:

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_5-C_6 cycloalkyl, C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl and a 5-6 membered saturated or unsaturated

heterocycle, wherein any member of said R^3 may optionally be substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, ~~$-S(O)_nN(R^2)(R^2)_2$~~ $-S(O)_nN(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, $-CN$, $-SR^2$, $-C(O)_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$; and

D' is selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_3 alkyl and C_3 alkenyl, wherein said alkyl or alkenyl may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, $-OR^2$, -O-Ar and Ar.

Claims 8-10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (original): The compound according to claim 1, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 700 g/mol.

Claim 12 (original): A compound according to claim 11, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 600 g/mol.

Claims 13-15 (canceled).

Claim 16 (currently amended): A pharmaceutical composition effective against viral infection comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound

according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~ and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

Claim 17 (original): The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16, further comprising an additional anti-viral agent.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method of using a compound according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~ as a therapeutic agent against viral infection, said virus requiring an aspartyl protease for an obligatory life cycle event.

Claim 19 (original): The method according to claim 18, wherein said virus is HIV-1, HIV-2, or HTLV.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The use according to any one of claims 1-4 ~~and 13-14~~, for inhibiting enzymatic activity in an aspartyl protease.

Claim 21 (original): The use according to claim 20, wherein said aspartyl protease is HIV protease.

Claim 22 (original): A method for preventing HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective

amount of a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16 or 17.

Claim 23 (original): A method for treating HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 16 or 17.

Claim 24 (original): The method according to claim 22 or 23, wherein said step of administering comprises oral administration or administration by injection.

Claims 25-27 (canceled).